

# Means of **STEADFASTNESS** in Islam

وسائل الثبات على دين الله



Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي



IN THE NAME OF  
**ALLAH**  
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



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*Means of*  
**STEADFASTNESS**  
*in Islam*

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# List of Contents

PUBLISHER'S NOTE	07
INTRODUCTION	09
Means of Steadfastness in Islam	13
1. Turning towards the Qur'an	13
Why is the Qur'an such a source of strength?	14
2. Adhering to the laws of Allah and doing righteous deeds	17
3. Studying the stories of the Prophets and following their example	20
4. <i>Ad-Du'ā'</i> (Supplication)	23
5. The Remembrance ( <i>dhikr</i> ) of Allah	24
6. Striving to follow the correct way	26
7. Training and education	28
8. Having confidence in the path you are following	30
9. <i>Ad-Da'wah</i> - Calling others to Allah	32
10. Keeping close to people who help you to be steadfast	34
11. Being confident of the help of Allah, and that the future belongs to Islam	36
12. Understanding the reality of falsehood and not being misled by it	37

13. Acquiring the characteristics that will help one to remain steadfast	39
14. The advice of the righteous man	41
15. Thinking about the delights of Paradise and the punishments of Hell-Fire, and remembering death	46
Situations where steadfastness is required	47
1. Times of trial and tribulation	48
Conclusion	52
2. Steadfastness in <i>al-Jihād</i>	53
3. Steadfastness in the Islamic way of life	53
4. Steadfastness at the time of death	54
SYMBOLS USED IN THIS BOOK	57
GLOSSARY	59
TRANSLITERATION CHART	63

## **Publisher's Note**

A Muslim may be acquainted with the pillars of Islam and with faith and basic knowledge to practise the religion, but this acquaintance is not enough for being steadfast in one's religion. At present, Muslims live in societies where many temptations of the era surround them. There are also many concepts, doubts and confusions which make Islam strange to many people who, if they do not end in apostasy, practise Islam as a merely inherited religion.

The author of this book has dealt with the means and ways that reinforce a Muslim's steadfastness in Islam in order to protect many people from going astray, not only because of following their desires, but also due to lacking the proper knowledge. Ignorance in religion is the cause of all harm people face everywhere.

The best feature of this book is that every principle discussed herein is deduced directly from the Qur'an and the authentic hadiths of the last Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him).

So, reading it will enable Muslims to seek the means described here to remain steadfast in Islam.



This is the second revised and improved version of the book, as the first edition was well received by the readers. Hope this edition will prove much more beneficial.

I pray to Allah, the Exalted, All-Glorious, to help the readers to benefit from this book and reward all of us. May Allah's blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, his family, Companions, and those who follow them till the Day of Reckoning, *Āmīn*.

Muhammad 'Abdul-Muhsin Al Tuwajjri,

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## Introduction

Praise be to Allah (ﷻ); we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from the evil of our own selves and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides cannot be led astray, and whomsoever He leaves astray cannot be guided. I bear witness that there is no true god except Allah Alone, with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His slave and messenger.

Steadfastness in the religion of Allah is a basic requirement for every sincere Muslim who wants to follow the Straight Path with determination and understanding. This matter is of great importance for a number of reasons, including the following:

- The present situation of the societies in which Muslims live, the types of temptation to which they are painfully exposed and the kinds of whims and desires, doubts and confusions have caused religion to become something strange, so that those who adhere to it are likened to something weird, and some people say: “The one who holds on to his religion is like the one who holds on to a burning coal.”

- Anyone who uses his brain will not doubt that Muslims today need the means of steadfastness more than their predecessors (*salaf*),<sup>1</sup> and that the effort required is greater, because of the corruption in our times and the scarcity and weakness of brothers and supporters who could help.
- The high incidence of apostasy (*riddah*) and back-sliding, even amongst those who are working for Islam, which causes some Muslims to fear ending up the same way, makes one seek the means of standing firm so that he can reach dry land.

About the relationship of this issue to the heart, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“It changes more than a pot of rapidly boiling water.”<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet (ﷺ) (Blessings and Peace be upon him) also gave another example of the heart:

“The heart (*qalb*) takes its name from its constant changes (*taqallub*: alteration, variation, ups and downs). The likeness of the heart is that of a

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<sup>1</sup> Lit. predecessors, Early pious generations in Islam.

<sup>2</sup> Aḥmad, 4/6; al-Ḥākim, 2/289; *Silsilat al-aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, hadith no. 1772.

feather at the root of a tree, being turned over and over by the wind.’’<sup>3</sup>

A poet said:

“He is only called *insān* (man) because of his *nisyān* (forgetfulness).

And it is only called *al-qalb* (the heart) because it constantly varies (*yataqallab*).”

Making one, who is swept about by the winds of doubt and confusion, stand firm is a serious matter which needs tremendous means, as befits the seriousness and difficulty of the task at hand.

It is part of Allah’s Mercy towards us that He has shown us, in His Book and through the words and life of His Prophet (ﷺ), many ways of being steadfast in Islam. I will discuss some of them in this booklet.

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<sup>3</sup> Aḥmad, 4/408; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘*, hadith no. 2364.



# Means of Steadfastness in Islam

## 1. Turning towards the Qur'an

The Qur'an is the foremost aid to standing firm in Islam. It is the strong rope and clear light of Allah. Whoever resorts to it, Allah (ﷻ) will protect him; whoever follows it, Allah will save him; and whoever calls to its way, Allah will guide him to the Straight Path.

Allah has stated that the reason why this Book (the Qur'an) was revealed in stages was to help His Messenger (ﷺ) to stand firm in his faith. In the context of refuting the doubts of the *kuffār* (disbelievers), He (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا ۚ وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا﴾ (٣٣)

(سورة الفرقان : ٣٢-٣٣)

﴿And those who disbelieve say: ‘Why was not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once?’ Thus [it is sent down in parts], so that We may strengthen your heart thereby. And We have revealed it to you gradually, in stages. And no example to similitude

do they bring [to oppose or to find fault in you or in this Qur'an], but We reveal to you the Truth [against that similitude or example], and the better explanation thereof. ﴿ (Qur'an 25: 32-33)

Why is the Qur'an such a source of strength?

\* Because it cultivates faith and purifies the soul through contact with Allah.

\* Because these *āyāt* (verses) bring peace and tranquillity to the heart of the believer, so he will not be swept about by the winds of *fitnah* (affliction); his heart will be content with the remembrance of Allah.

\* Because it provides the Muslim with the correct understanding and values with which he will be able to evaluate the situation around him. It also gives him the standards against which he may judge things in a proper and consistent manner, without varying from one situation or person to another.

\* Because it refutes the doubts that are stirred up by the enemies of Islam, the *kuffār* and *munāfiqoon* (hypocrites) alike, as in the following examples from the early days of Islam.

The effect of the *āyah* (verse):

﴿Your Lord [O' Muhammad] has neither forsaken you nor hates you.﴾ (Qur'an 93: 3)

— on the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ), when the *mushrikoon* (polytheists) said, “Muhammad has been forsaken...”<sup>4</sup>

The effect of the *āyah* (verse):

﴿... لِسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ﴾  
(سورة التحل: ١٠٣)

﴿... The tongue of the man they refer to is foreign, while this [the Qur'an] is a clear Arabic tongue.﴾  
(Qur'an 16: 103)

The Quraysh disbelievers claimed that Muhammad (ﷺ) was taught by a human being and that he took the Qur'an from a Roman carpenter in Makkah.

The effect of the *āyah* (verse):

﴿... أَلَا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا﴾ ... ﴿٤٩﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٤٩)  
﴿... Surely, they have fallen into trial [fitnah]...﴾  
(Qur'an 9: 49)

— on the hearts of the believers, when the *munāfiq* (hypocrite) said:

﴿... أَتَذَن لِّي وَلَا تَفْتِنِي﴾ ... ﴿٤٩﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٤٩)

<sup>4</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ an-Nawawī*, 12/156.



﴿... Grant me leave [to be exempted from *al-jihād* (Holy War)] and put me not into trial...﴾

(*Qur'an* 9: 49)

Is it not the greatest of help, strengthening the heart of the believer, refuting doubts and silencing the voices of falsehood? Indeed it is, by Allah.

When the believers were coming back from al-Hudaybiyah,<sup>5</sup> Allah promised them much war booty which they alone would go and take (i.e., the booty of Khaybar)<sup>6</sup>. He (ﷺ) told them that the *munāfiqoon* would ask to accompany them, but the Muslims would say, “You shall not follow us.” They would persist in trying to change the words of Allah, and they would say to the believers:

﴿... بَلْ تَحْسُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

(سورة الفتح: ١٥)

﴿... ‘Rather, you envy us’. But they were not understanding except a little.﴾ (*Qur'an* 48: 15)

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<sup>5</sup> Hdaybiyah: a place near west of Makkah, known for the historic treaty between the last Prophet and the Quraysh in 6 AH leading to the final victory of Makkah three years after.

<sup>6</sup> A place 100 miles away to the north from Madīnah, a strong hold of the Jews, subdued by the Muslims within a year after the treaty of Hdaybiyah.

Later, all of this happened to the believers, step by step and word by word.

— From this we can see the difference between those whose lives are connected to the Qur'an: who read it, recite it, memorize it, study it, ponder over its meanings and take it as their starting-point and their refuge, and those who are preoccupied with the words of man.

— Would those who seek knowledge devote most of their efforts to understanding the Qur'an properly!

## 2. Adhering to the laws of Allah and doing righteous deeds

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ﴾

(سورة إبراهيم : ٢٧)



﴿Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world [i.e., they will keep on worshipping Allah Alone and none else], and in the Hereafter. And Allah will cause to go astray those who are Dhālimoon [polytheists and wrongdoers], and Allah does what He wills.﴾

(Qur'an 14: 27)

Qatādah<sup>7</sup> said:

“As for the life of this world, Allah will help them to be steadfast in doing good and righteous deeds; and in the Hereafter (He will help them) to remain steadfast in the grave.” A similar interpretation is narrated by more than one of the *Salaf*.<sup>8</sup>

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا﴾  
(سورة التيساء: ٦٦)

﴿... but if they had done what they were told, it would have been better for them, and would have strengthened their [Faith];﴾ (Qur'an 4: 66),

— i.e., it would have strengthened them in their adherence to the Truth.

This is clear, for how can you expect steadfastness on the part of those who are too lazy to do righteous deeds when *fitnah* (trial or affliction) raises its ugly head and calamity increases? But Allah will guide those who believe and do righteous deeds by their faith to the Straight Path.

<sup>7</sup> Qatādah ibn Di'āmah as-Sadoosy (679 CE / 60 AH — 735 CE / 117 AH): A *Tabi'i* (follower of the Prophet's Companions) Imam of *Tafsīr* in Baṣrah, a student of the Companions Anas ibn Mālik, Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri and a number of *Tabi'i* scholars.

<sup>8</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Adhīm* by Ibn Kathīr, 4/421.

So, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to persevere in doing righteous deeds, and the most beloved of good deeds to him were those that were continuous, even if they were small. When his Companions started to do anything, they would persist in it, and when ‘Ā’ishah<sup>9</sup> (رضي الله عنها) (may Allah be pleased with her) did something, she would keep it up. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to say:

“Whoever perseveres in doing twelve *rak’ahs* (prayer units — i.e. the *rawātib* or the *sunnah* prayers which the Prophet did constantly), Paradise will be his right.”<sup>10</sup>

According to a hadith *qudsi*,<sup>11</sup> Allah (ﷻ) says:

“My slave will keep drawing near to me with *nafl* (non-obligatory) acts of worship until I love him.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A wife of the Prophet and mother of the believers — a daughter of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph. Born in Makkah in 614 CE / 9 years before *Hijrah* and died 678 CE / 58 AH in Madīnah.

<sup>10</sup> *Sunan at-Tirmidhi*, 2/273; he said the hadith is *ḥasan* or *ṣaḥīḥ*; see also *Ṣaḥīḥ an-Nasā’i*, 1/388 and *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmidhi*, 1/131.

<sup>11</sup> Divine inspiration expressed in the words of the last Prophet, a hadith wherein the Prophet says in the name of Allah with the expression, “Allah says,...

<sup>12</sup> Bukhārī, see *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 11/340.

### 3. Studying the stories of the Prophets and following their example

The evidence for this is the *āyah*:

﴿وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (١٢٠)

(سورة هود: ١٢٠)

﴿And all that We relate to you [O' Muhammad] of the news of the Messengers is in order that We may make strong and firm your heart thereby. And in this [chapter of the Qur'an] has come to you the Truth, as well as an admonition and a reminder for the believers.﴾ (Qur'an 11: 120)

Such *āyāt* were not revealed at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for the purpose of mere entertainment and amusement. They were revealed for an important purpose, which was to strengthen the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ) and, likewise, the hearts of the believers.

\* Think about the meaning of the *āyāt*:

﴿قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا إِلَٰهَتَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ﴾ (٦٨) ﴿قُلْنَا يَسَنَّاكَ كُوفِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ﴾ (٦٩) ﴿فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ الْأَخْسَرِينَ﴾ (٧٠)

(سورة الأنبياء: ٦٨-٧٠)

﴿They said: ‘Burn him and help your *ālihah* [gods], if you will be doing.’ We [Allah] said: ‘O’ fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrāhīm [Abraham]!’ And they wanted to harm him, but We made them the worst losers.﴾

(*Qur’an* 21: 68-70)

Ibn ‘Abbās<sup>13</sup> (رضي الله عنه) (may Allah be pleased with him), said:

“The last thing Ibrāhīm said when he was thrown in the fire was, ‘Allah is Sufficient for me and He is the Best Disposer of affairs.’ ”<sup>14</sup>

Do you not feel how he stood firm in the face of oppression and torture when you read this story?

\* Think about the *āyāt* in which Allah (ﷻ) tells us about Moosa (Moses) (عليه السلام) (May peace be upon him):

﴿فَلَمَّا تَرَاهُ الثَّغَمَانِ قَالَ أَصْحَبُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَمَذْكُورُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٦٢﴾﴾ (سورة الشعراء: ٦١-٦٢)

﴿And when the two hosts saw each other, the companions of Moosa said: ‘We are sure to be overtaken.’ [Moosa] said: ‘Nay, verily with me is

<sup>13</sup> A cousin and the Companion of the Prophet, served the Prophet for ten years and was considered to be *Imam al-Mufasssirin* - leader of the *Qur’an’s* exegetes. Died in Ṭāif 687 CE / 68 AH.

<sup>14</sup> *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, 8/229.

my Lord. He will guide me.'»

(*Qur'an* 26: 61-62)

Do you not feel how he stood firm when he was being pursued by the army of Fir'awn (Pharaoh) and was surrounded by cries of despair from his own people?

\* Read the story of the magicians of Pharaoh, which is an example of a small group that adhered firmly to the Truth once it had become apparent to them. Do you not see how they stood firm in the face of threats issued by the oppressor who said:

﴿... ءَامَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَاذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكِيدٌ كَرِيمٌ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكَ  
السِّحْرَ فَلَا يَقْطَعُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خَلْفٍ وَلَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِي  
جُذُوعِ النَّخْلِ وَلَنَعْلَمَنَّ أَيُّنَا أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَى﴾ (٧١)

(سورة طه: ٧١)

﴿... You believed in him [Moses] before I gave you permission? Verily he is your chief who has taught you magic. So I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of date-palms, and you shall surely know which of us [I (Fir'awn — Pharaoh) or the Lord of Moses] is more severe in [giving] punishment and more enduring.﴾

(*Qur'an* 20: 71)

The small group of believers stood firm with no thought of retreat, and said:

﴿... لَنْ نُؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا  
فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا﴾ (٧٢)

(سورة طه : ٧٢)

﴿... We prefer you not over what have come to us of the clear signs and over Him [Allah] Who created us. So decree whatever you desire to decree, for you can only decree [regarding] the life of this world.﴾ (Qur'an 20: 72)

\* Also think about the stories of the believer in *Soorat Yāsīn* (Chapter — 36), the believer of Pharaoh's household, the people of the Ditch (*al-ukhdood*) and others, which teach us the greatest lessons we could ever learn about standing firm in our faith.

#### 4. *Ad-Du'ā'* (Supplication)

One of the characteristics of the believing slaves of Allah is that they turn to Allah (ﷻ) with *ad-du'ā'*, asking Him to help them to stand firm:

﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا...﴾ (٨)

(سورة آل عمران : ٨)



﴿Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate [from the Truth] after You have guided us...﴾ (Qur'an 3: 8)

... رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا ... ﴿

(سورة البقرة: ٢٥٠)



﴿... Our Lord! Pour out constancy [patience] on us and plant firmly our feet...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 250)

The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) told us that:

“The hearts of the sons of Adam are as one between the fingers of the All-Merciful, and He directs them as He wills.”<sup>15</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) often used to say,

“O’ Controller of the hearts, make my heart adhere firmly to Your religion.”<sup>16</sup>

## 5. The Remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah

This is one of the greatest means of being steadfast in Islam.

\* Think about the combination described in this *āyah*:

<sup>15</sup> Imam Ahmad and Muslim from Ibn ‘Umar; see *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ an-Nawawī*, 16/204.

<sup>16</sup> At-Tirmidhi from Anas. *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī*, 6/349; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’*, hadith no. 7864.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا  
 اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٤٥)

‘O’ you who have believed, when you meet a group [of enemies] stand firm [against them] and remember the Name of Allah much [both with tongue and mind], so that you may be successful.﴾

(Qur’an 8: 45)

*Adh-dhikr* is one of the most effective aids in standing firm in *al-jihād* (holy war).

“Think about how the physical strength of the Persians and Romans let them down when they needed it most,” said Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, in *ad-Dā’ wad-Dawā’*,

“Despite the small numbers of men and weapons, the people who remembered Allah much became victorious over them.”

\* How did Yoosuf stand firm in facing the temptation of the powerful and beautiful woman who called him to do wrong? Did he not enter the fortress of “seeking refuge in Allah” and thus defeated the waves of temptation? This is the effect of *al-adhkār*<sup>17</sup> on making the believers steadfast.

<sup>17</sup> Sing. *dhikr*; remembrance of Allah.

## 6. Striving to follow the correct way

The only correct way which every Muslim must follow is the way of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, the path of the successful group and the sect on the safe mode of the Prophet's guidance — saved from being astray, the people of pure *'aqidah* (faith) and sound methodology, the followers of the *Sunnah* (Prophet's traditions) and only (sound) evidence. The Muslim must be distinct from the enemies of Allah and different from the people of falsehood.

If you want to know the value of this in standing firm, then ask yourself: Why have so many people in the past and the present been led astray? Why have they become confused? Why have their feet not stood firm on the Straight Path? Why did they not die following it, or why did they come to it so late in life, after wasting so much precious time?

So, you see them moving from one kind of misguided *bid'ah* (heresy) to another, from philosophy to *'ilm al-kalām* (scholastic theology), from *al-Mu'tazilah*<sup>18</sup> thought to the way of twisting and misinterpreting the clear *āyāt* (verses) of the Qur'an, from one *Ṣooḥī* (Islamic mystic) *ṭarīqah* (school) to another...

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<sup>18</sup> A theological school which introduced speculative dogmatism in Islam.

Thus are the people of *bid'ah* confused and shaky in their faith. See how the people of *'ilm al-kalām* are deprived of steadfastness at the time of death. One of the *salaf* (predecessors) commented,

“The people who suffer the most doubt at the time of death are the people of *al-kalām*.”

But think about it, has any follower of *ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* ever turned his back on this way in discontent after he has come to know and understand it? People may abandon it because of their whims and desires, or because of doubts if their understanding is weak; but no one has left because he saw something better or because he thought this way was wrong.

The proof of this is to be seen in the questions posed by Heraclius to Abu Sufyān about the followers of Muhammad (ﷺ). He asked,

“Has anyone ever left this religion out of discontent after entering it?”

Abu Sufyān said, “No.”

Heraclius then said, “This is how it is when the joy of faith fills the heart.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bukhāri, See *Fath al-Bāri*, 1/23.

We have heard a lot about great leaders who moved from one kind of *bid'ah* to another, and others whom Allah (ﷻ) guided, and so they left falsehood behind and joined the *madhhab*<sup>20</sup> of *ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, despising their former ways. But do we ever hear about the opposite?

If you want to stand firm in your Islam, then you must follow the way of the believers.

## 7. Training and education

Gradual conscious training in faith, based on knowledge, is one of the basic factors in standing firm in Islam.

**Faith Training** is that which fills the heart and consciousness with fear, hope and love [of Allah (ﷻ)], as opposed to the dryness which results from ignoring the texts of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* and devoting too much attention to the words of men.

**Knowledge Training** is that which is based on only *Ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) evidences, as opposed to mere imitation and blind following.

**Conscious Training** is that which recognizes the way of the sinners and wrongdoers, studies the plots of the

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<sup>20</sup> *Madhhab*: Juristic school, school of thought. There are four famous schools of thought, Ḥanafī, Mālīkī, Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī.

enemies of Islam and properly understands and evaluates reality and events, as opposed to a blinkered world view and narrow horizons.

**Gradual Training** is that which takes the Muslim step by step towards achieving perfection with proper planning, as opposed to spontaneous and hasty progress in fits and starts.

In order to understand the importance of this element in standing firm, let us go back to the *sīrah* (biography) of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and ask ourselves:

\* What was the source of the Companions' steadfastness in Makkah, at the time of their persecution?

\* How could Bilāl, Khabbāb, Muṣ'ab, the family of Yāsir and other dispossessed Muslims stand firm? How could even the greatest of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) stand firm when they were boycotted by others?

\* Is it possible that they could have stood firm without extensive training under the supervision of the Prophet (ﷺ), which had honed and refined their personalities?

\* Take, for example, the *Ṣaḥābi* Khabbāb ibn al-Art (رضي الله عنه), whose owner used to heat an iron skewer until it was red-hot, then place it on his bare back where it would burn until it was extinguished by the fat of his back flowing over it. What made him able to bear all that with patience and perseverance?

\* And think of Bilāl (ؓ) beneath the rock on the burning sands, and Sumayyah (ؓ) in chains and fetters...

\* Look at the Madīnan period and ask, “Who stood firm with the Prophet (ﷺ) at Ḥunayn<sup>21</sup> when most of the Muslims fled? Was it the new converts who had become Muslims at the Conquest of Makkah, but had not yet received sufficient training at the hands of the Prophet (ﷺ) and most of whom had gone out only in search of booty?” No... most of those who stood firm were the crème de la crème of the believers, who had already received that great training.

Had they not received such training, do you think they would have stood firm?

## **8. Having confidence in the path you are following**

There is no doubt that the more confident the Muslim is of the path he is following, the more steadfast he will be in adhering to it. There are many ways of achieving this, including the following:

\* Feeling that the way which you are following is not something new that started in this century, but that it is an

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<sup>21</sup> Ḥunayn: A narrow valley between Makkah and Ṭāif, three miles away from Makkah. It received fame because of the fierce battle in the 8th year after *Hijrah*, and after the conquest of Makkah.

ancient and venerable way which the Prophets, speakers of truth, scholars, martyrs and righteous people have followed before you. This will reduce your feelings of loneliness and replace your alienation with a sense of comfort; and your sadness will turn to joy because you will feel that all these people are your brothers in your way and methodology.

\* Feeling that you are among the chosen. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ...﴾ (٥٩)

(سورة النمل : ٥٩)

﴿...Praise and thanks are to Allah, and peace be on His slaves whom He has chosen [for His Message]!...﴾ (Qur'an 27: 59)

﴿ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا...﴾ (٣٢)

(سورة فاطر : ٣٢)

﴿Then We gave the Book [the Qur'an] for inheritance to those We have chosen of Our slaves...﴾ (Qur'an 35: 32)

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَجْنِبُكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ...﴾ (٦)

(سورة يوسف : ٦)

﴿Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives [events, dreams and other things]...﴾ (Qur'an 12: 6)



Just as Allah has chosen the Prophets, so the righteous have a share in their being chosen to inherit the knowledge of the Prophets.

\* How would you feel if Allah had created you inanimate, a dumb beast, a *kāfir*, one who calls to *bid'ah*, an immoral wrongdoer, a Muslim who does not call others to Islam or one who calls to a way that is filled with error?

Do you not see that this feeling of having been chosen by Allah (ﷻ) and made one of those who call to the way of *ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* is one of the factors which will keep you steadfast in your methodology and in this path?

## 9. *Ad-Da'wah* — Calling others to Allah

The soul that is not active will stagnate. One of the most important fields in which one can be active is the field of *ad-da'wah* (calling others to Allah). This is the work of the Prophets, the work which will save you from punishment, make you realize your potential and enable you to achieve great things.

﴿فَلِذَاكَ فَادِّعْ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ ...﴾ (سورة الشورى: ١٥)

(سورة الشورى: ١٥)

﴿So unto that [religion of Islam] invite [people]  
[O' Muhammad], and be straight [on Islamic

Monotheism by performing all that is ordained by Allah (good deeds), and by abstaining from all that is forbidden by Allah (sins and evil deeds)] as you are commanded...» (Qur'an 42: 15)

It is not true to say that someone is neither making progress nor slipping back (for if you are not making progress, you are falling back — no one is static). If a person is not occupied in acts of worship and obedience, he will be busy with sin and disobedience; as faith can wax and wane (it does not remain constant).

Calling to the correct method — by devoting time to it, making mental and physical efforts and speaking out, so that *ad-da'wah* becomes the main concern of the Muslim — will block the *Shayṭān's* (Satan's) efforts to tempt him and lead him astray.

In addition to that, being challenged by obstacles and stubborn people on the journey of *ad-da'wah* will make the *dā'iyah* (caller to Islamic faith, preacher, missionary) stronger in faith.

Besides bringing a great reward, *ad-da'wah* is also a means of being steadfast in one's faith and protecting oneself from backsliding, because the one who is attacking does not need to defend himself, and Allah (ﷻ) is with the *dā'iyahs*, making them stand firm. The *dā'iyah* is like a doctor fighting illness with his experience and knowledge.

By fighting the illness in others, he will be the least likely to suffer it himself.

## **10. Keeping close to people who help you to be steadfast**

These are people whose characteristics were mentioned by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the following hadith:

“Among the people are some who open the way to goodness and close the way to evil.”<sup>22</sup>

Looking for scholars, righteous people and believing *dā‘iyahs*, and keeping close to them, is a great help in remaining steadfast. When times of trial arose in Islamic history, Allah (ﷻ) helped the Muslims to stand firm with the help of some individuals.

For example, ‘Ali ibn al-Madīni (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah supported His Religion with *aş-Şiddiq* (Abu Bakr) at the time of the *Riddah* (Apostasy), and with Imam Aḥmad at the time of the test.”

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<sup>22</sup> *Ḥasan* hadith reported by Ibn Mājah from Anas, 237, and by Ibn Abu ‘Aşim in *Kitāb as-Sunnah*, 1/127. See also *Silsilat al-aḥādith aş-Şaḥiḥah*, hadith no. 1332.

Think of what Ibn al-Qayyim said about the role of his Sheikh, Sheikh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyyah) in helping Muslims to stand firm:

“When our fear became too great and we began to think the worst and things got too difficult for us, we would come to him. We only had to see him and hear his words, and all that would go away, to be replaced by tranquillity, strength, assurance and calm. Glory be to the One Who made His slaves witness Paradise before their meeting with Him, opened its door to them in this world and caused them to feel its fragrant breezes so that they would devote all their energy to seeking it and competing for it.”<sup>23</sup>

Here, Islamic brotherhood emerges as a basic source of steadfastness. Your righteous brothers, leaders and teachers are a source of help for you on the path and a strong pillar on which you can lean. They can make you more steadfast through the *āyāt* they know and the wisdom they possess; so stick with them and live among them; do not be alone, lest the *shayāṭīn*<sup>24</sup> should overwhelm you, for the sheep that the wolf eats is the one that wanders off away from the flock.

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<sup>23</sup> *Al-Wābil aṣ-Ṣayyib*, p. 97.

<sup>24</sup> Sing. *shayṭān* (Satan); Devils.

## 11. Being confident of the help of Allah, and that the future belongs to Islam

We need to stand firm even more when victory is delayed, so that we do not go astray after being steadfast. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَكَايْنٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِيتُونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِلَّا أَن قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَكَانَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ ﴿١٤٨﴾ ...﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٤٦-١٤٨)

﴿And how many a Prophet [i.e., many from amongst the Prophets fought in Allah's Cause] and along with him fought many religious scholars. But they never lost heart for that which did befall them in Allah's Way, nor did they weaken or submit. And Allah loves *aş-Şābirin* [the patient]. And they said nothing but: 'Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions [in keeping our duties to You], establish our feet firmly and give us victory over the disbelieving folk.' So Allah gave them the reward of this world, and the excellent reward of the Hereafter...﴾ (Qur'an 3: 146-148)

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to calm down his persecuted Companions and make them steadfast at times of persecution and testing, he told them that the future belonged to Islam. What did he say? Bukhāri reported from Khabbāb that he (ﷺ) said:

“Allah will certainly complete this matter (i.e., Islam), until a traveller will be able to go from Ṣan‘ā’ to Ḥaḍramawt fearing nothing except Allah and the wolf that may attack his sheep.”<sup>25</sup>

Telling the young generations about the hadiths that give the good news of the future belonging to Islam is an important part of their education and training to stand firm in their religion.

## 12. Understanding the reality of falsehood and not being misled by it

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٩٦)

«Let not the free disposal [and affluence] of the disbelievers throughout the land deceive you.»

(Qur'an 3: 196)

<sup>25</sup> Bukhāri; see *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, 7/165.

This offers reassurance to the believers and helps them to stand firm.

Allah also tells us:

﴿...فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِعًا...﴾ (١٧)

(سورة الرعد: ١٧)

﴿...and the torrent carried a rising foam...﴾

(*Qur'an* 13: 17)

This is a lesson for those who have intelligence not to fear falsehood or submit to it.

The Qur'an also exposes the aims and means of the people of falsehood, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِتَسَيِّنَ سَبِيلَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ﴾ (٥٥)

(سورة الأنعام: ٥٥)

﴿And thus do We explain the *āyāt* [proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.] in detail, that the way of the *mujrimoon* [criminals, polytheists, sinners] may become manifest.﴾

(*Qur'an* 6: 55)

Thus, Muslims will not be caught unaware and they will know from which direction Islam will be attacked.

\* How often have we heard about and seen movements collapsing and *dā'iyahs* losing their steadfastness because

of attacks which they did not expect due to their ignorance of their enemies?

### 13. Acquiring the characteristics that will help one to remain steadfast

The most important of these is *aṣ-ṣabr* (patience). Bukhāri and Muslim report that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No one is given any gift greater and more bountiful than patience.”<sup>26</sup>

The greatest patience comes at the onset of a disaster. If something unexpected befalls a man, the disaster will overwhelm him and he will lose his steadfastness if he does not have patience.

\* Think about what Ibn al-Jawzi said:

“I saw an old man, nearly eighty years old, who always used to come to the *jamā‘ah* (congregation) prayers. When a son of his daughter died, he said, ‘No one should pray to Allah any more, because He does not respond.’ Then he said, ‘Allah is stubborn and does not leave us a son.’”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Bukhāri: *Kitāb az-Zakāh*, Bāb *al-Isti‘fāf ‘an al-Mas’alah*; and Muslim: *Kitāb az-Zakāh*, Bāb *Faḍl at-Ta‘affuf waṣ-Ṣabr*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ath-Thabāt ‘ind al-Mamāt* by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 34.



— Exalted be Allah far above what he said.

\* When the Muslims were defeated at the battle of Uḥud<sup>28</sup>, this disaster was quite unexpected, because Allah had promised them victory, but Allah taught them a hard lesson through the blood of the martyrs.

﴿أَوَلَمَّا أَصَبْتُمْ مُمْسِيَةً قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أِنَّا هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٥)

«[What is the matter with you?] When a single disaster smites you, although you smote [your enemies] with one twice as great, you say: ‘From where does this come to us?’ Say [to them], ‘It is from yourselves [because of your evil deeds]...’»

(Qur'an 3: 165)

How could they have been the cause of it?

﴿... إِذَا فِشَلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَّعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَرْسَلَكُمْ مَّا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٢)

«... when you lost your courage and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed after He

<sup>28</sup> Name of a mountain in the north of Madīnah. This was the second battle spot where the Muslims faced the Quraysh army in 2 AH and suffered defeat.

showed you [of the booty] which you love. Among you are some that desire this world...﴾

(*Qur'an* 3:152)

## 14. The advice of the righteous man

When the Muslim is faced with trials, he should consider that as a test from God to purify his soul. Allah will help him to stand firm through a righteous man who will advise and guide him. Through this man's words, Allah helps the believer to stand firm and directs his steps. These words remind him of Allah (ﷻ), the Meeting with Him, His Paradise and His Hell. There follow some examples from the life of Imam Aḥmad, who entered the test and emerged as pure gold.

He was taken in chains to al-Ma'moon who had already issued him such a stern warning, before he reached him, that a servant said to Imam Aḥmad,

“It hurts me, O' Abu 'Abdullah, that al-Ma'moon has unsheathed a sword which he has never unsheathed before, and he swears by his relationship to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that if you do not accept what he says about the Qur'an being created, he will certainly kill you with that sword.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, 1/332.

At that point, the intelligent scholars took the opportunity to say to their Imam words that would help him to remain steadfast. In *as-Siyar*, adh-Dhahabi reports from Abu Ja‘far al-Anbāri:

“When I was told that Aḥmad had been taken to al-Ma’moon I crossed the Euphrates and found him sitting in an inn, where I greeted him. He said, ‘O’ Abu Ja‘far, why did you go to the trouble (of coming here)?’ I said, ‘Listen to me, today you are the leader and the people are following you. By Allah, if you accept that the Qur’an is created, a lot of people will go along with that, but if you do not, then neither will they. Even if this man (al-Ma’moon) does not kill you, you will still die, because death is inevitable, so fear Allah and do not go along with him (al-Ma’moon).’ Aḥmad began to weep and said, ‘*Mā shā’ Allah* (Allah willed).’ Then he said, ‘O’ Abu Ja‘far, say it again,’ so I said it again, and he kept saying, ‘*Mā shā’ Allah....*’ ”<sup>30</sup>

With regard to his being taken to al-Ma’moon, Imam Aḥmad said:

“We reached ar-Raḥbah at midnight, and a man came to us and said, ‘Which of you is Aḥmad ibn

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<sup>30</sup> Adh-Dhahabi: *as-Siyar* 11/238.

Ḥanbal?’ He was told, ‘This man.’ He said to the camel-driver, ‘Slow down.’... Then he said, ‘Listen to me, why should you worry if you get killed here and go to Paradise?’ Then he said, ‘May Allah be with you,’ and left. I asked about him and I was told, ‘He is an Arab from the tribe of Rabī‘ah who deals with wool in the desert. He is called Jābir ibn ‘Āmir, and they say good things about him.’’’<sup>31</sup>

In *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* (Book Title), we read that a Bedouin said to Imam Aḥmad:

“Listen to me, you are a representative of the people, so do not be bad news for them. You are the leader of the people today, so beware of doing what they [rulers] are asking you to do, lest you should bear their sins on the Day of Resurrection. If you love Allah, then bear this with patience, for the only thing standing between you and Paradise is your being killed.”

Imam Aḥmad said:

“His words strengthened my resolve not to do what they [rulers] were asking me to do.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Siyar A‘lām an-Nubalā’*, 11/241.

<sup>32</sup> *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, 1/332.

It is reported that Imam Aḥmad said:

“I never heard any stronger words at that time than what a Bedouin said to me at Raḥbat Ṭawq, a village between ar-Raqqah and Baghdād on the banks of the Euphrates. He said, ‘O’ Aḥmad, if they kill you for the Truth, you will be a *shahīd* (martyr), and if you live, you will be praised.’ And so my heart grew strong.”<sup>33</sup>

Imam Aḥmad said of the young man Muhammad ibn Nooḥ, who accompanied him at that time of trial:

“Even though he was so young, he had such great knowledge. I never saw anyone who adhered more firmly to the command of Allah than Muhammad ibn Nooḥ, and I hope that his end was good. He said to me one day, ‘O’ Abu ‘Abdullah, you are not like me. You are a man whom people follow, and they are straining their necks to see what you will do, so fear Allah and adhere to His commands.’ Then he died, and I prayed the *janāzah* (funeral) prayer for him and buried him.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Siyar A‘lām an-Nubalā’*, 11/241.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 11/242.

Even his fellow-prisoners, whom Imam Aḥmad used to lead in prayer in chains, had a role to play in helping him to stand firm. One day, when he was in prison, Imam Aḥmad said,

“I don’t care about being in prison — it is no different from my home — or about being killed by the sword, but I am afraid of the trial of being whipped.” One of the prisoners heard him and said, “Don’t worry, O’ Abu ‘Abdullah, it is only two lashes of the whip, then you don’t feel where the rest fall.” It was as if this reassured him and calmed him down.<sup>35</sup>

So try to seek advice from righteous people, and try to understand it if it is given to you.

\* Seek their advice before you travel, if you think that something could happen to you.

\* Seek their advice when you are facing some trial, or before some test that you expect to face.

\* Seek their advice if you are appointed to a position of authority, or if you inherit some wealth.

Make yourself stand firm, and help others to do so too. Allah is the Protector of the believers.

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<sup>35</sup> *Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’*, 11/240.

## 15. Thinking about the delights of Paradise and the punishments of Hell-Fire, and remembering death

Paradise is the abode of joy, the consolation of those who grieve and the final destination of the believers. The soul is by nature not inclined to make sacrifices, work hard or stand firm unless it gets something in return, that makes difficulties easy and helps it to overcome the obstacles in its way.

The one who knows about the reward will find it easy to work hard, because he will be aware that if he does not remain steadfast, he will miss out a Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth. The soul needs something to lift it above the dust of this earth and raise it to the heavenly world.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used the mention of Paradise to encourage his Companions to stand firm. According to a *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* hadith, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) passed by Yāsir, ‘Ammār and Umm ‘Ammār when they were being tortured for the sake of Allah and said,

“Patience, family of Yāsir, patience, family of Yāsir, for your destination is Paradise.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Al-Ḥākim, 3/383; it is a *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* hadith. See *Fiqh as-Sīrah*, ed. al-Albānī, p. 103.

The Prophet (ﷺ) also used to tell the Anṣār<sup>37</sup>:

“You will face selfish people after my death, so have patience until you meet me at the *Hawḍ* (cistern) on the Day of Judgement.”<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, one should think about the situation of both groups (believers and disbelievers) in the grave, the gathering, the reckoning, the scales of justice, the bridge over Hell and the other events of the Hereafter.

Remembering death protects the Muslim from backsliding and helps him to adhere to the limits set by Allah, the Almighty, All-Gracious, so he does not transgress them. If he knows that death is closer to him than his own shoelaces and that his time could come at any moment, how can he let himself slip or persevere in deviation? Hence, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Always remember the destroyer of pleasure.”<sup>39</sup>

## Situations where steadfastness is required

There are many such situations which need to be discussed in detail, but we can only list them in brief here.

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<sup>37</sup> Lit. Helpers, the people of Madīnah who welcomed the last Prophet and his Makkān Companions when life with Islam was made unpardonable in Makkah.

<sup>38</sup> Bukhārī and Muslim.

<sup>39</sup> At-Tirmidhi, 2/50; classed as *ṣaḥīḥ* in *Irwāʾ al-Ghālīl*, 3/145.



## 1. Times of trial and tribulation

Trials and tribulations can cause the heart to change. Whether they are the trials of ease or of hardship, only those who have understanding and whose hearts are filled with faith can remain steadfast.

Among the different types of trials are:

\* **The trial of wealth.** Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهَ لَئِنْ آتَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ  
لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ﴾ (٧٥) فَلَمَّا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ  
فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

(سورة التوبة: ٧٥-٧٦)

﴿And of them are some who made a covenant with Allah [saying]: ‘If He bestowed on us of His Bounty, we will verily give *Ṣadaqah* [*Zakāh* and voluntary charity in Allah’s Cause] and will be certainly among those who are righteous.’ Then when He gave them of His Bounty, they became niggard [refused to pay the *Ṣadaqah* (*Zakāh* or voluntary charity)], and turned away, averse.﴾

(*Qur’an* 9: 75-76)

\* **The trial of worldly power and authority.** Allah, the Almighty, All-Glorious, says:

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾  
(سورة الكهف: ٢٨)

﴿And keep yourself [O' Muhammad] patiently with those who call on their Lord [i.e., your Companions who remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers, and other righteous deeds] morning and afternoon, seeking His Face [pleasure]; and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts, and whose affair [deeds] has been lost.﴾  
(*Qur'an* 18: 28)

Concerning the danger of these two types of trial, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Two hungry wolves sent against the sheep could not do more damage to them than the damage done by a man's eagerness for wealth and power to his religion.”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Ahmad: *al-Musnad*, 3/460; see also *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'*, hadith no. 5496.

The meaning is that a man's desire for wealth and power will do more damage to his religion than the damage done by two hungry wolves to a flock of sheep.

\* **The trial of one's wife.** Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ...﴾ (سورة التغابن: ١٤)

﴿... Verily, among your wives and your children there are enemies for you [i.e., may stop you from the obedience of Allah], therefore beware of them!...﴾ (Qur'an 64: 14)

\* **The trial of children.**

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Children are the cause of cowardice, the cause of stinginess and the cause of grief.”<sup>41</sup>

\* **The trial of persecution, oppression and injustice.**

Allah (ﷻ) has described this in the most evocative terms in the Qur'an:

﴿قِيلَ اصْعَبْ الْأَخْذُودِ﴾ (٤) النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ ﴿٥﴾ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُمْ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا نَقَمُوا

<sup>41</sup> Abu Ya'la, 2/305 — it also has corroborating reports. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'*, hadith no. 7037.

مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٨﴾ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٩﴾

(سورة البُرُوج : ٤-٩)

«Cursed were the people of the Ditch [in the story of the Boy and the King] [containing] the fire fed with fuel when they were sitting by it [fire]. And they witnessed what they were doing against the believers [i.e., burning them]. And they [believers] had no fault except that they believed in Allah, the All-Mighty, Worthy of all Praise! To Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth! And Allah is Witness over everything.»

(*Qur'an* 85: 4-9)

Bukhāri reported from Khabbāb (رضي الله عنه) who said:

“We complained to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he was reclining on his cloak in the shade of the Ka‘bah.’”

He said:

‘Among the people who came before you, there was a man who was taken and put into a hole dug for him in the earth. A saw was put on his head and he was cut into two pieces, and an iron comb was used to tear the flesh from his bones, but this still did not turn him away from his religion.’”<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Bukhāri, *Fath al-Bāri*, 12/315.

\* **The trial of the *Dajjāl*** (pseudo-Christ), which is the greatest trial in this world.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“O’ people, there has never been any *fitnah* (trial) on the face of the earth, since Allah created Adam, greater than the trial of the *Dajjāl*... O’ slaves of Allah, O’ people, stand firm, for I shall describe him to you in a way that no Prophet before has described him...”<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusion

With regard to the heart and the trials it is subjected to, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Hearts are exposed to trials one after the other. Any heart that succumbs to them is stained with a black spot, and any heart that resists them becomes pure white, until all hearts are one of these two types. The white heart is intensely white and will not be harmed by any trial as long as heaven and earth remain; and the black heart is intensely black and does not recognize good or forbid evil, except what suits its own whims and desires.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibn Mājah, 2/1359; see *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘*, hadith no. 7752.

<sup>44</sup> Imam Aḥmad, 5/386, and by Muslim, 1/128 — this version is narrated by Muslim.

## 2. Steadfastness in *Al-Jihād*

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا ...﴾ (٤٥)

(سورة الأنفال: ٤٥)

﴿O' you who have believed, when you meet a group [of enemies], stand firm [against them]...﴾  
(*Qur'an* 8: 45)

One of the major sins (*kabā'ir*) in our religion is running away from the battlefield. When the Prophet (ﷺ) was carrying earth on his back while they were digging the trench (*al-khandaq*), he repeated with the believers,

“Make us steadfast when we meet our enemies.”<sup>45</sup>

## 3. Steadfastness in the Islamic way of life

The *Qur'an* says:

﴿مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا﴾ (٢٣)

(سورة الأحزاب: ٢٣)

﴿Among the believers are men true to their covenant with Allah [i.e., they have gone out for

<sup>45</sup> Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Ghazawāt, Bāb Ghazwat al-Khandaq*. See *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 7/399.

*al-jihād* (fighting in the Cause of Allah), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers]. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration.﴾

(*Qur'an* 33: 23)

Their principles are dearer to them than their own souls, and their determination knows no compromise.

#### 4. Steadfastness at the time of death

The *kuffār* and immoral people are denied steadfastness at the most difficult and most stressful times, and they cannot utter the *Shahādah* (testimony of faith) at the time of death — which is one of the signs of a bad end. A man who was dying was told to say *Lā ilāha illā Allah*, but he started to move his head from right to left, refusing to say it. Another dying man started to say, “This is an excellent piece, this is a bargain,”. A third one began to mention the names of various chess pieces, and a fourth started to hum the tunes of songs, or to mention the name of someone he loved. This is because those things distracted them from remembering Allah (ﷻ) in this world.

You may see some of these people with blackened faces, or a foul odour, or turning away from the *qiblah*

(direction of *ka'bah*), *Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illa billah* — there is no strength or power except with Allah.

But the people of righteousness, who follow the *Sunnah*, are helped by Allah (ﷻ) to stand firm at the time of death, and so they utter the *Shahādatayn* (*Lā ilāha illā Allah, Muhammad Rasoolullah*). You may see some of them with a cheerful face and a pleasant scent, looking as if they are hearing good news when their souls are taken from their bodies.

This is an example of one of those whom Allah helped to be steadfast at the time of death. His name was Abu Zar‘ah ar-Rāzi, one of the Imams in the field of hadith: “Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Warrāq said: ‘We were with Abu Zar‘ah in Mashahrān, one of the villages of ar-Riyy, when he was dying, and Abu Hātim, Ibn Wārah, al-Mundhir ibn Shādhān and others were with him.’” They remembered the hadith, ‘Tell those who are dying to say *Lā ilāha illā Allah*,’ but they felt too shy to tell Abu Zar‘ah to say it. They said, ‘Let us mention the hadith.’ Ibn Wārah said: ‘Abu ‘Āṣim told us, ‘Abdul-Ḥamīd ibn Ja‘far told us, from Ṣāliḥ,’ and he started to say, ‘Ibn Abu...’ but he could not go any further. Then Abu Hātim said, ‘Bundār told us Abu ‘Āṣim told us, from ‘Abdul-Ḥamīd ibn Ja‘far, from Ṣāliḥ...’ but he could not go any further, and the rest remained silent. Then Abu Zar‘ah, whilst was dying, opened his eyes and said: ‘Bundār told us, Abu ‘Āṣim told us, ‘Abdul-Ḥamīd told us, from Ṣāliḥ ibn Abu ‘Arīb from



Kathīr ibn Murrah from Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal who said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

‘Whoever says *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* as his last words will enter Paradise.’

— then his soul departed, may Allah have mercy on him.’<sup>46</sup>

These are the ones of whom Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ  
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي  
كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ﴾ (سورة فصلت: ٣٠)

¶Verily, those who said: ‘Our Lord is Allah [Alone],’ and then they stood straight [followed Islam truly], on them the angels will descend [at the time of their death] [saying]: ‘Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!’ (Qur’an 41: 30)

O’ Allah! Make us among them. O’ Allah! We ask you to make us adhere to Islam with determination and wisdom, and the end of our prayer is that praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, *Āmīn*.

<sup>46</sup> *Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’*, 13/76, 85.

## **Symbols used in this book**

(ﷻ): *Ṣubḥānahu wa Ta‘āla* — The Exalted

(ﷺ): *Ṣalla-Allahu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam* — Blessings and  
Peace be upon him

(ﷺ): *‘Alayhis-Salām* — May Peace be upon him

(ﷺ): *Raḍia-Allahu ‘Anhu* — May Allah be pleased with  
him

(ﷺ): *Raḍia-Allahu ‘Anha* — May Allah be pleased with  
her



## Glossary

<i>Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jamā'ah</i>	اهل السنة والجماعة	The majority of Muslims who stick to the <i>Sunnah</i>
<i>Āmīn</i>	آمين	O' Allah answer
<i>'Aqīdah</i>	عقيدة	Faith, creed, belief
<i>Āyāt</i>	آيات	Sing. <i>āyah</i> ; Proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.
<i>Bid'ah</i>	بدعة	Innovation in religion
<i>Da'wah</i>	دعوة	Calling others to Allah
<i>Dajjāl</i>	دجال	Pseudo-Christ
<i>Dhikr</i>	ذِكْر	Remembrance of Allah
<i>Du'ā'</i>	دُعَاء	Supplication
<i>Fitnah</i>	فِتْنَة	Affliction, Trial
<i>'Ilm al-Kalām</i>	عِلْم الكلام	Scholastic theology
<i>Insān</i>	إنسان	Man
<i>Janāzah</i>	جنازة	Funeral
<i>Jihād</i>	جِهَاد	Fighting in the Cause of Allah
<i>Kāfir</i>	كافر	Pl. <i>Kuffār</i> ; Disbeliever

<i>Kabā'ir</i>	كبائر	Sing. <i>Kabīrah</i> ; Major Sins
<i>Mā shā' Allah</i>	ما شاء الله	What Allah willed
<i>Madani</i>	مدني	Attribution to Madīnah, Madīnan
<i>Madhhab</i>	مذهب	Juristic school
<i>Manhaj</i>	منهج	Method, way, path
<i>Munāfiq</i>	مُنافِق	Pl. <i>Munāfiqoon</i> ; Hypocrite
<i>Nafl</i>	نفل	Non-obligatory, supererogatory
<i>Nisyān</i>	نسيان	Forgetfulness
<i>Qalb</i>	قلب	Heart
<i>Qiblah</i>	قِبلة	The direction of prayer (Ka'bah)
<i>Riddah</i>	رَدّة	Apostasy
<i>Ṣabr</i>	صبر	Patience
<i>Ṣaḥābah</i>	صحابَة	Sing. <i>Ṣaḥābi</i> ; Companions of the Prophet
<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'</i>	صحيح : الجامع	Lit. Authentic collection; Bukhārī's Authentic volume
<i>Salaf</i>	سلف	Lit. Predecessors; the early pious generations of Islam
<i>Sīrah</i>	سيرة	Biography

<i>Shahādah</i>	شهادة	Testimony, saying <i>Lā ilāha illā Allah Muhammad Rasoolullah</i>
<i>Shahīd</i>	شهيد	Martyr, killed in a holy war or for the cause of Allah
<i>Shayṭān</i>	شیطان	Satan (devil)
<i>Taqallub</i>	تقلب	Alteration, variation, ups and downs
<u><i>Dhālimoon</i></u>	ظالمون	Sing. <u><i>Dhalim</i></u> ; Lit. unjust, wrongful; Polytheists and wrongdoers, etc.
<i>Zakāh</i>	زكاة / زکوة	Annual obligatory prescribed charity (or poor-due) by a Muslim in possession of riches, merchandise, agricultural produce etc. over a prescribed limit called <i>niṣāb</i> . A pillar of Islam



# TRANSLITERATION CHART

أ	a
آ . ي	ā
ب	b
ت	t
ة	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	<u>dh</u> / ṣ



ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ - ه - هـ	h
و	w
و (as a long vowel)	oo
ي	y
ي (as a long vowel)	ī / ee
ء	, (Omitted in initial position)

َ	Fatḥah	a
ِ	Kasrah	i
ُ	Ḍammah	u
ّ	Shaddah	Double letter
◌◌	Sukoon	Absence of vowel